REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending in this application.

Applicants have amended claims 1, 2, 6, 12, 15, and 18. The changes to the claims made herein do not introduce any new matter.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by *Barry et al.* ("*Barry*") (US 5,859,711). As will be explained in more detail below, the *Barry* reference does not disclose each and every feature of independent claims 1, 6, 12, 15, and 18, as amended herein.

Considering first independent claim 1, Applicants have amended claim 1 to define a print management system including, among other features, a print allocation module that, when the received print demand includes plural printing requests of a partly or wholly identical image, allocates the plural printing requests to one printing device. This prevents non-uniformity of printing results of an image, which is caused by the difference of color reproductivity between printing devices when an image is printed using different printing devices.

The *Barry* reference discloses a printing system that shortens the time period needed to complete one print job. In the system of *Barry*, a print job is parsed into multiple pages, and the pages are distributed to multiple print engines depending either upon the availability of the engines, which is a function of the number of print engines, or upon the characteristics of the page, which could require either monochromatic or multicolor printing.

The system of *Barry* divides a print job into monochromatic pages and multicolor pages and allocates the pages to a monochromatic printer and a multicolor printer, respectively. However, in the system of *Barry*, an identical image is not necessarily printed by a single printer, i.e., the same printer, every time for at least the reason that the system

includes multiple multicolor printers. Thus, the system of *Barry* does not include a print allocation module as specified in present claim 1, and does not avoid the non-uniformity of printing results of an image caused by printing an image using different printing devices.

Turning to independent claim 6, this claim defines a print management system that includes, among other features, a print allocation module that, in response to reception of a second print demand including a printing request of a same image as an allocated image of a printing request of a first print demand, which has already been sent to a given printer of the multiple printing devices, allocates the printing request of the second print demand to the given printer. As discussed above, the system of *Barry* does not necessarily print an identical image using the same printer because the system includes multiple multicolor printers. Thus, the system of *Barry* does not include a print allocation module as specified in present claim 6.

Shifting to independent claim 12, this claim defines a print management system that handles the situation where a print demand includes a printing request of an image that is provided with settings of a number of pages and a number of copies. In this situation, the print allocation module allocates the print demand as a whole or in units of pages to one of the multiple printing devices. This ensures that each of the copies of the image will be printed by the same printer. As discussed above, the system of *Barry* does not necessarily print an identical image using the same printer because the system includes multiple multicolor printers. Thus, the system of *Barry* does not include each and every feature of the print management system defined in present claim 12.

With regard to independent claims 15 and 18, these claims are method claims that correspond to print management system claims 1 and 6, respectively. Claims 15 and 18 have been amended along the same lines that claims 1 and 6 have been amended. As such, the arguments set forth above regarding present claims 1 and 6 also apply to present claims 15 and 18, respectively.

Accordingly, for at least the foregoing reasons, independent claims 1, 6, 12, 15, and 18, as amended herein, are patentable under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over *Barry*. Claims 2-5, each of which ultimately depends from claim 1, claims 7-11, each of which ultimately depends from claim 6, claims 13 and 14, each of which ultimately depends from claim 12, claims 16 and 17, each of which depends from claim 15, and claims 19 and 20, each of which depends from claim 18, are likewise patentable under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over *Barry* for at least the same reasons set forth above regarding the applicable independent claim.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and reexamination of claims 1-20, as amended herein, and submit that these claims are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, a notice of allowance is respectfully requested. In the event a telephone conversation would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner may reach the undersigned at **(408) 749-6902**. If any additional fees are due in connection with the filing of this paper, then the Commissioner is authorized to charge such fees to Deposit Account No. 50-0805 (Order No. ITECP013).

Respectfully submitted,
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